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"Environment for Europe"

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(Item 9 of the provisional agenda)

**BIODIVERSITY AT THE FIFTH MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE
"ENVIRONMENT FOR EUROPE"**

Report prepared by the United Nations Environment Programme's - Regional Office for Europe
and
by the secretariat of Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy, Council of Europe

Introduction

1. Preparations for a biodiversity-related session for the fifth Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" were considered at the Second Intergovernmental Conference "Biodiversity in Europe"/Sixth Meeting of the Council for the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy (PEBLDS) held from 24 to 28 February 2002 in Budapest. The Budapest Conference agreed upon tentative topics for discussion and expected outputs and instructed the Bureau of the Council for PEBLDS to proceed with the preparations. The next meeting of the Bureau is scheduled for late May or early June 2002. The summary of the discussions and the relevant decisions of the Budapest Conference is presented below.

Topics for discussion and expected outputs

2. The biodiversity session of the Kiev Conference should be held under the overall umbrella of the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy and focus on several major topics identified by the Council for PEBLDS as follows:

(a) The Pan-European Strategy. The Kiev Conference may confirm the further development and implementation of the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy as the central framework for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in the region. A resolution on biological diversity, outlining a vision, goals and objectives of the PEBLDS for the next decade, can be prepared and submitted to the Ministers for endorsement;

(b) Financing biodiversity. The session may consider, as appropriate, the development of the European Biodiversity Resourcing Initiative, a joint venture of Switzerland, the Netherlands, the European Centre for Nature Conservation, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Council of Europe and Rabobank. It is hoped that the initiative will result in a new approach to the financing of biodiversity activities in Europe. This new approach may be presented to Ministers at Kiev for endorsement and follow-up action;

(c) Framework for cooperation between PEBLDS and the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe. A new joint work programme, or other framework for cooperation between the PEBLDS and the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe, can be submitted for adoption to the Fourth Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (Vienna, April 2003), and then to the Kiev Conference. A proposal for elements of the framework for cooperation was considered by the Budapest Conference in February 2002 and will be further discussed at the expert-level meeting of the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe in June 2002;

(d) Outcome of the Pan-European High-level Conference on Agriculture and Biodiversity. Following the decision of the Aarhus "Environment for Europe" Conference, the Government of France and the Council of Europe in cooperation with UNEP are convening the High-level Conference on Agriculture and Biodiversity (June 2002, Paris). The Conference is expected to adopt a declaration on agriculture and biodiversity to be submitted to Kiev. The Conference may also decide to prepare and submit for the consideration of the Ministers at Kiev a set of recommendations for follow-up action taking into account the latest developments;

(e) Pan-European ecological network. Following the proposal of the Government of Denmark, the Bureau of the Council for PEBLDS will consider the possibility of presenting a declaration on the Pan-European ecological network for endorsement and possible signature at Kiev. The aim of the declaration would be to reconfirm the political commitment of European Governments to establishing such a network with due regard to provisions of related legally binding instruments. The Council for PEBLDS will also prepare and present a progress report on the implementation of PEBLDS during 1998-2003.